

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 102
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PEPR, CT, EWWT, CF

SUBJECT: MEETING OF CONGO-CAE TRANSPORT COMMISSION

SUMMARY: THE CONGO-CAE TRANSPORT COMMISSION MET APRIL 6-10 TO

FURTHER RESOLVE OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES OVER TRANSPORT TO LAND-
LOCKED CAE. ACCORDING TO THE CONGOLESE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES,
RELATIONS ARE DEFINITELY IMPROVING EVEN THOUGH BOTH COUNTRIES
CONTINUE TO LACK AMBASSADORIAL REPRESENTATION IN THEIR
RESPECTIVE CAPITALS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PERMANENT CONGO-CAE MIXED COMMISSION FOR THE COORDI-
NATION OF SURFACE TRANSPORT MET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ALMOST
TWO YEARS FROM APRIL 6 TO 10, 1978, IN BANGUI. ALTHOUGH
MEETINGS THEORETICALLY SHOULD BE HELD TWICE A YEAR, SEVERAL
HAD BEEN POSTPONED AND THEN, IN LATE 1977, THE CAE ACCUSED
THE CONGO OF DIVERTING POL SUPPLIES DESTINED FOR THE CAE.
THOSE ACCUSATIONS WERE FINALLY LAID TO REST WHEN THE TWO
HEADS OF STATE MET AT THE UDEAC SUMMIT IN LIBREVILLE IN
DECEMBER 1977. THE COMMISSION WAS A LOGICAL FORUM FOR
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RESTORING THE COOPERATION NECESSARY TO OPERATE THE TRANSPORT
ROUTE FROM BANGUI TO THE OCEAN VIA THE OUBANGUI RIVER AND
THE BRAZZAVILLE POINTE NOIRE RAILROAD.

2. ACCORDING TO THE CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE CAE MINISTER
OF TRANSPORT, JEAN-PIERRE BOUBA, THE COMMISSION DISCUSSED THE
PROBLEM OF THE RIVER TAX, WHICH NEEDS TO BE INCREASED "WITHIN

REASONABLE LIMITS" TO PROVIDE THE MAINTENANCE OF THE WATERWAY. MAINTENANCE IS A PARTICULARLY SALIENT ISSUE NOW, WHEN LOW WATER HAS HIGHLIGHTED DREDGING AND OTHER PROBLEMS.

3. THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE NOTED THAT THE CONFEREES HAD ALSO DISCUSSED THE SITUATION OF CONGOLESE PERSONNEL WORKING FOR THE CENTRAL AFRICAN RIVER TRANSPORT COMPANY (ACCF) AND THE CONGOLESE CHARGES FOR TRANSPORT BETWEEN POINTE NOIRE AND BRAZZAVILLE. ACCORDING TO THE CONGOLESE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, THE CENTRAL AFRICANS WANT TO DISMISS SOME 80 CONGOLESE EMPLOYED FOR MANY YEARS BY ACCF. CONGO WISHES TO INSURE THE RETIREMENT AND OTHER RIGHTS OF THOSE EMPLOYEES, WHOSE TENURE DATES BACK TO BEFORE THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE ACCF BY THE GOCAE. ON THE OTHER ISSUE, THE CENTRAL AFRICANS REQUESTED THAT TARIFF INCREASES ON THE POINTE NOIRE-BRAZZAVILLE SEGMENT BE KEPT AS INFREQUENT AND SMALL AS POSSIBLE. THE CONGOLESE, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING CAE PROBLEMS ARISING FROM ITS LANDLOCKED STATUS, ARGUE THAT THEY NEED THE RECEIPTS TO PAY BACK THE LOANS MADE

FOR IMPROVING THE RAILROAD. ROUGHLY 30 PERCENT OF THE TRAFFIC ON THE POINTE NOIRE-BRAZZAVILLE RAILROAD IS CENTRAL AFRICAN IN ORIGIN OR DESTINATION, ACCORDING TO THE CONGOLESE CHARGE. THE CONGO DOES NOT INSIST THAT THE CAE PAY CASH, BUT IT DOES ASK THE CAE TO PAY SOMETHING INITIALLY AND TO MAKE FURTHER PAYMENTS WHEN IT IS ABLE, HE SAID.

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4. RELATIONS IN GENERAL BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE IMPROVING, ACCORDING TO THE CONGOLESE CHARGE. DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IS STILL AT THE LEVEL OF CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AS A RESULT OF INCIDENTS DATING BACK FIVE YEARS. HOWEVER, THE TWO COUNTRIES MANAGED TO RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES OF LAST FALL OVER ALLEGED DIVERSION OF POL SUPPLIES, AND THE TWO CHIEFS OF STATE EMBRACED EACH OTHER WARMLY IN LIBREVILLE. THE CONGOLESE DELEGATION TO THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT COMMISSION, LED BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT MARTIN MBIA, WAS VERY WELL RECEIVED, AND A CAE DELEGATION HAS SINCE TRAVELED TO BRAZZAVILLE WITH A MESSAGE FROM THE EMPEROR TO THE CONGOLESE PRESIDENT.

QUAINTON

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